

PAWTUXET RIVER AUTHORITY dba  
PAWTUXET RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL  
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Memorandum

To: Meg Kerr, Chairwoman, RI Rivers Council  
From: Guy Lefebvre, Executive Director, PRWC  
Date: November 16, 2002  
Re: PRWC 2002 Annual Report to RIRC

Below please find our report:

EDUCATION PROGRAM

*Edgewood Environmental Education Project.* The neighborhood of Edgewood is located in Cranston and is surrounded by three very different water body types - the Roger Williams Park Ponds to the northwest, Narragansett Bay to east, and the Pawtuxet River to the south. The PRWC was one of twelve community partners in the year-long project. As one element of the overall project, the PRWC sponsored a writing project working with approximately fifty fourth grade students in two Cranston public elementary schools. The project culminated with the publication of 300 copies of *A River Flows By - Our Reflections*, a twelve page booklet in which the writing of fifteen students is featured in four styles: story, essay, poem and creative nonfiction.

*Coventry Build-out Analysis.* During the spring academic term, the PRWC worked through the Rhode Island Rivers Council and the Brown University Center for Environmental Studies to have three environmental studies majors conduct a residentially zoned land build-out analysis. At the invitation of the PRWC, the town planner and his staff were active participants in the project that culminated in a presentation to the Coventry Town Council by all parties involved. The study concluded that Coventry, which is the state's largest municipality in land area, would reach build-out level in 2037 using mid-range assumptions, and could reach build-out level in 2017 using high-range assumptions.

*Signage Program.* The PRWC collaborated with the RI Department of Transportation to have "Pawtuxet River" signs erected on Routes 37, 95 and 295 as well "Entering Pawtuxet River Watershed" signs on Route 1 (Providence and Warwick); 2 (Warwick); 5 (Johnston and Warwick); 6 (Foster); and 102 (Coventry/West Greenwich town line and Glocester.) The PRWC also designed, produced and erected new signs at the Phenix-Harris and Arkwright Riverwalks. Conceptual plans have also been developed for educational kiosk signage for which construction funds are being sought.

RECREATION PROGRAM

*Pawtuxet River Walkway.* The PRWC formed the West Warwick Riverwalk Committee in the late autumn of 2001. This committee, with the assistance of a landscape architect, created a combined visual and written conceptual plan that envisions a river walkway commencing at the Centerville Dam, traversing the western bank of the Pawtuxet River, crossing the river by covered bridge at Arctic Falls, and then traversing the eastern bank of the river up to the Royal Mills Dam. In the spring of 2002, the committee hosted a walking tour for community leaders and the news media, and assembled 25 sponsorship packages of the conceptual plan. In June, 2002, the General Assembly using the sponsorship package included the project as a \$3 million component of a \$14 million heritage bond which the voters of Rhode Island approved in November, 2002.

*Veteran's Square River Access Project.* The PRWC toured the Town of West Warwick with the town planner to identify potential open space projects. The PRWC recommended the Veterans Square River Access Project to open the viewshed and improve access, and then assisted the town to obtain a \$140,000 open space grant from the RI Department of Environmental Management's Division of Planning and Development. The PRWC also assisted the town in finding a party willing to relocate the Veterans Square Diner, and is entering into a ten year renewable care and custody agreement with the town to maintain the property which includes a 600 square foot shed ideal for canoe storage.

## PROTECTION PROGRAM

*Pawtuxet Falls Fish Passage Project.* The PRWC has obtained grants and written commitments from four sources (approximately \$60,000) and grants pending for three additional sources (approximately \$80,000) to design and build a fish passage at Pawtuxet Falls where the Pawtuxet River and its watershed enters Narragansett Bay. The Pawtuxet River at this location forms the boundary between Warwick and Cranston, respectively, the state's second and third largest municipalities measured by population. The site is also the boundary between Providence and Kent Counties and was a principal location cited in Roger Williams' 17<sup>th</sup> Century original agreement with the Native Americans. Reestablishment particularly of herring and shad is expected for seven miles of the main stem of the Pawtuxet River and three miles of the Pocasset River. These ten river miles are unimpeded upstream from the Pawtuxet Falls Dam.

*Natick Dam and Pond.* In June, 2002, the PRWC took tax title of the Natick Dam. Natick Pond, created by Natick Dam, includes the confluence of the north and south branches of the Pawtuxet River east of Riverpoint Park in West Warwick. By eventually becoming the fee simple owner of this dam, the PRWC anticipates being able to bring exemplary stewardship to this vital section of the river. This stewardship includes: a. plans to restore the dam itself which is located on the border of Warwick and West Warwick; b. creating a highly specific open space and riparian buffer protection plan for Natick Pond; and c. a significant restoration plan for Riverpoint Park. A feasibility assessment for hydroelectric power potential has also been initiated that seeks to balance ecological habitat factors with renewable energy development needs.

## HERITAGE PROGRAM

*Pawtuxet River Day.* The PRWC raised money and then produced the annual state river day festivities for the Pawtuxet River Watershed. Pawtuxet River Day activities included litter cleanups, canoe rides, and a concert at the gazebo located in the center of Arctic Village in West Warwick. The PRWC also collaborated with the RI Water Resources Board and the West Greenwich Conservation Commission to conduct a major tire cleanup -- approximately 800 tires were removed from the Big River Management Area.

*River Heritage Celebration.* The PRWC held its second annual River Heritage Celebration at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet for which Representative Eileen Naughton was the honorary chairperson. Awards were presented in the categories of education, recreation, protection, heritage as well as the Senator Donald Roch Founder's Award. A silent auction was included in the celebration.

## CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

*Project Acquisition and Development.* The PRWC has used web-based technology and software to identify and solicit grants and sponsorships to fund and manage projects described under the Pawtuxet River Restoration Framework and Watershed Action Plan. Approximately twenty grants and sponsorships have been ascertained during the five quarters from July, 2001, through September, 2002. The PRWC acquired a digital camera, a color copier, and several mapping software programs to electronically document present watershed conditions and facilitate creating vision packages to fund projects. Assisted by a landscape architect, a formal preliminary plan was made for a *Pawtuxet Watershed Education Center* for the site where the RI DEM Pawtuxet Supply Depot is presently located. State capital development plans call for relocating this supply depot from Cranston to Johnston. This preliminary plan

was a hard dollar contribution valued at six thousand dollars. The PRWC also repaired one canoe and received a donated canoe-- both canoes are located at the Veterans Square shed to provide ready access to the public working with PRWC members.

*Collaboration & Web-based Networking.* The PRWC has conducted formal networking with a large number of government agencies, private sector companies and nonprofit organizations by both attending meetings and using web-based communications. The pawtuxet.org website has been developed over the past year to include over one hundred separate pages. An example of government agency collaboration was working with the US Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide input to the Pocasset River Flood Management Study. Examples of private sector company collaboration were working with Diversified Technology Consultants to create the Pawtuxet Watershed Education Center preliminary plan, and having representatives of the Heatron Corporation of Warwick continue to provide long term monthly water quality sampling data to the PRWC. An example of nonprofit organization collaboration was the RI Association of Landscape Architects letting the PRWC invite their entire membership list to display at the River Heritage Celebration. The PRWC also collaborates with the Environment Council of RI and its forty member organizations that meet monthly at the Audubon Society of RI headquarters located at the Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge.

#### *Expenditures Summary*

Hardware & equipment	\$1,317
Software projects	\$656
Web connection & hosting services	\$1,650
Presentation supplies & printing	\$540
Signage	\$410
Information	\$252
Grant writing	\$2,700
Graphic design	\$675
Website design & networking	\$1,800
Total	\$10,000

#### *Leveraging Summary*

	Monetary Contributions	Volunteer Time	Total
Edgewood Env Educ Program	\$500	\$315	\$815
Coventry Build-out Analysis		\$1,680	\$1,680
Signage Projects		\$720	\$720
Pawtuxet River Walkway	600	\$2,200	\$2,800
Veterans Square River Access	\$1,800	\$2,040	\$3,840
Pawtuxet Falls Fish Passage	\$33,000	\$300	\$33,300
Natick Dam & Pond Restoration	\$4,500	\$360	\$4,860
Big River Mgt Area Tire Cleanup	\$1,000	\$600	\$1,600
River Heritage Events	\$3,600	\$2,050	\$5,650
Pawtuxet Watershed Center Plan	\$6,000	\$240	\$6,240
Total	\$51,000	\$10,505	\$61,505

#### Notes:

1. Pawtuxet River Walkway project led to General Assembly and state voters approving general obligation bonds in the amount of \$3 million. A Baltimore based developer recently prevailed over a competitor to initiate a \$70 million potential investment in the Royal Mills redevelopment project for which the riverwalk committee and its river walkway project provided impetus.
2. Student labor calculated at \$10/hr; regular member labor at \$15/hr; and professional labor at \$60/hr.
3. The PRWC thus estimates hard dollars leverage at 5:1 and soft volunteer time leverage at 1:1 for an overall leverage of 6:1.